A LOYAL LOVE

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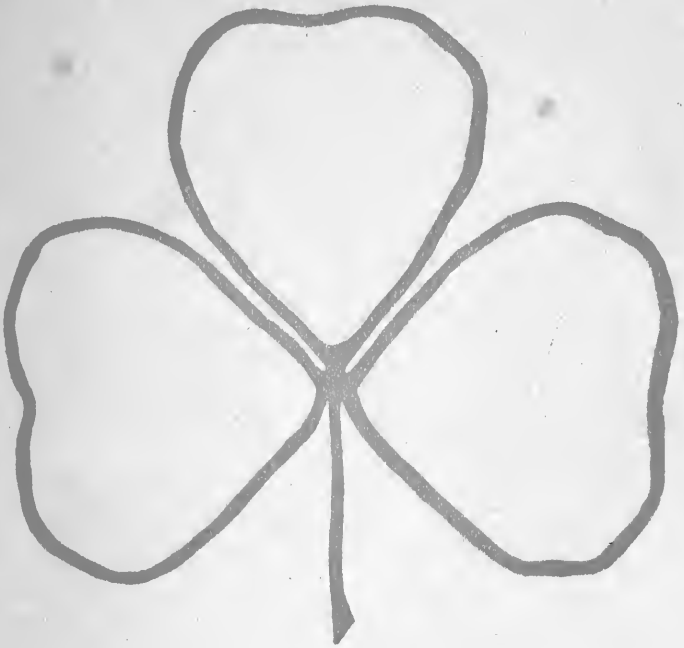

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BY

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CHAPTER I

IF one could but look into the garden of The Priory, in October, 1802, the year and month that Robert Emmet came back to Ireland from long exile in France! It was at The Priory that he found Sarah Curran grown, in his absence, from a schoolgirl to young womanhood, with her heart, as yet, a virgin page on which no name was written.

An unpretentious house, in a few acres of lawn, orchard and formal gar-

den, was this country seat of Curran, wit and orator of the Irish bar; but it was set picturesquely at the fir and larch screened entrance to a lonely glen, on the lower slope of Dublin mountains. No curious wayfarer might look into the inclosure, but from within, over the yellow stonecrop that gilded the top of the gray wall, there was a wide and charming prospect of land and sea. Across the flats below, the dim, fog and smoke canopied city of Dublin lay on the crescent of the bay, with its white-winged shipping and its guardian light of the Hill of Howth. Southward a higher range of the wild Wicklow mountains marked a horizon; but here, in the circling sweep of low, billowy ridges, many thatch-roofed vil-

lages, pleasant country estates, and the medieval towers of Rathfarnham castle lay sheltered. From that garden no vista was more peaceful and sweet than that of the little river Dodder. It foamed down the declivity, skirted the walls of The Priory and the last crags below, and took its capricious way eastward across the meadows to Donnybrook and Milltown, thence northward to the city into the insalubrious flood of the Liffey. The path, worn smooth along its high grassy bank by generations of loitering peasant lovers, led from The Casino, the retreat of Emmet's father, at Milltown, to the tryst with Sarah Curran, in the garden of The Priory.

This precious small demésne, hallowed now by memories of that na-

tional tragedy of patriotism and love, was, as Curran once said of it, "a little toilet-room in creation where a gentleman might shave and dress for eternity." Curran loved the place, won by hard bouts with fortune, as only such an emotional nature as his could love. He lived in the garden every hour he might, never tired of the lovely changes of the landscape, from dawn till dusk, from season to season. And there he kept secluded from the world, like a jewel in a casket,— a jewel in which he had pride, no doubt, but of whose worth he seemed careless or unaware, — the dark-eyed, motherless young daughter, whose heart was laid a sacrifice on the old, old altar of Irish liberty.

CHAPTER II

NEVER could The Priory have been more enchanting than in that month of October, 1802, when every inmate of it awaited the return of the master from a visit to Paris. Sun and center around which everything else revolved, the life of the place seemed suspended without him. Only the week before he had written his son Richard, saying wittily that he had had little for dinner beside the bill, and to tell Sarah he had not forgotten her. Wonderful that he had not forgotten her, amid all the social attentions that had

been showered on him in the French capital. Doubtless he had dined with Napoleon and Talleyrand — lucky mortals — and would have a sparkling flood of anecdote and description, drollery and pathos, to make an evening all laughter and poetry and tears for the worshipful little home circle at The Priory.

After the "two dishes at five o'clock sharp," they would go into the garden for the long hours of northern twilight. Sarah was glad her father was coming home before this season of St. Martin's summer, that he loved, should give way to the fogs and rains of November. It would be quite perfect there, under the amber banners of the chestnuts and beeches on the lawn, with banks of purple of the heather and fairy gold

of gorse flowers running up the mountain slope to meet other piled-up banks of sunset. Of keen intellect and poetic temperament like his own, her brilliant father, and "this brave world that had such wonders in it," as yet filled all of Sarah Curran's fancy.

But from much of her father's life she was excluded. From the convivial table and talk of that masculine household, seldom without its distinguished guests, she must often have been shut out. In Curran's biographies she appears not at all, except in that single casual message from Paris, and as brief menace to his fame and fortune. Then she is dropped from that record, the sea of oblivion rolling over her memory as if she had never been. It is difficult to realize that she ever

laughed and wept at her father's conceits, followed him with wistful eyes, loved and lost, and was banished from that garden. An ardent child, she lived on the fringe of his life, obscurely, almost unknown to the countless guests who dined and slept at The Priory and went away to celebrate the social gifts of its master. An evening when there was no company, and all those gifts were lavished on her, must have been a red-letter day in the life of Sarah Curran.

Every afternoon, at the hour of closing of the courts, the carriage was sent into the city. From the doorway she could always see it returning, as soon as it had cleared the huddle of mean streets of The Liberties of Dublin and come into the open country.

Thence she watched its progress across the plain to the bridge at Harold's Cross, and up through the village of Rathfarnham. Now, as the carriage slowly climbed the rocky road, she could see Richard on the box with the coachman. That meant at least five guests inside with her father! Not even on his home-coming, then, could he bear to dine alone with his family.

A sigh of disappointment, perhaps, as the vision of that golden evening alone with him vanished. But surely there was not a tear. Only a slip of a girl of twenty she was, but she had extraordinary courage and self-control, sympathy and understanding. "Mademoiselle seems to be a true pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft," is the comment the Home Secretary made on her letters

to Emmet, when they were bandied about among king and courts. No one knew, so well as she, the reverse of the medal whose bright side her father turned so gallantly to the world,— the ghost of lost happiness and honor that haunted that house of mirth at The Priory. The bright side was "Stuttering Jack" Curran, the wittiest, dreamiest, most rollicking and daring blade, the most gifted and ambitious of all the scamps of Trinity of thirty years before; who had married for love, and lived gaily on nothing a year, now prosperous, courted, and high in favor with the government. The reverse was a man who had been deserted and disgraced by the mother of his children. This was the bitter drop that poisoned Curran's cup of life. Unless it was full

of interesting and admiring guests, The Priory was a purgatory to him.

Now Sarah directed a maid to see that fresh linen was in the sleeping-rooms and the table reset. She herself sped down to where the choicest peaches had been left to ripen on a sunny wall for the after-dinner dessert that was always served in the drawing-room. When the carriage drew up at the entrance she was in her place in the doorway to greet her father's guests. Slim and smiling, white-gowned in the short-waisted, scant-skirted fashion of the first empire, was this young chatelaine of The Priory, chestnut hair piled high above an aquiline face of surprising fairness, and shining out from it Curran's own soft, brilliant, high-arched dark eyes.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM GODWIN was often there from England, and Tom Moore, troubadour, son of a Dublin grocer, who already had London society at his feet. No old men were there, certainly. Curran's contemporaries had all been dropped from his circle, for the spectacle of advancing age, with its waning enthusiasms, depressed him. He himself, at fifty-two, refused to grow up, kept his youthful figure and the face of a dreamer and roguish boy. The group about him was always made up of his juniors, picked up among the

talented youngsters who haunted the courtroom when he was to speak. In this group now was one who wore a detached air, as if the company were foreign to his mood,— that one-time young fire-eater of Trinity College debating society fame, Robert Emmet, come back to Erin.

He did not look dangerous now, only serious and sad beyond his years. In person he was small and wiry, as if capable of endurance; his face lean, and of a dark pallor; hair straight and falling on a forehead high and broad, and brows projecting above eyes heavy-lidded, gray, and searching. His nose was prominent, thin, and straight, ending combatively in a sharp point. Intense gravity, grim earnestness, and supreme self-confidence

marked him. He was not a man who would add gayety to Curran's dinner-table. But now there was intense curiosity about him, interest in his views, and the manner in which he would take the new order of things in the Irish capital. Around him there was the glamour of romance of a brilliant young man, who has long been labeled dangerous, and who has lived in a foreign land for the safety of the government. He was the center of the company that presently went into dinner — "two seconds after five, and Curran would not delay dinner for the viceroy."

There was no time that Sarah Curran could remember when she had not known Robert Emmet. In childhood they had all lived in the city, the

Currans in Ely Place, off St. Stephen's iron-railed Green; Dr. Emmet, physician to the viceregal court, with his already distinguished elder son, in double mansions fronting the park itself. Even as a very little girl she had an impression of the importance of the family, on every member of which nature had lavished talents. Robert, the youngest, had no more than entered Trinity College at the age of fifteen with Richard and young Walsh and Tom Moore, before he attracted the attention of the authorities by an amazing gift for oratory that was matched with daring to spread sedition among his mates.

It was 1793, the time of The Terror in France. In Ireland fires that had long smouldered burst into rebellion in

1798. At any other time, in any other place than Dublin University, but little attention would have been paid to these ebullitions of youth. Other students said more than he, but Robert Emmet was a marked lad. His father was a fiery patriot who gave up all his preferments rather than his opinions; his elder brother, Thomas Addis Emmet, was a civil leader of the rebellion, was imprisoned, and finally exiled. At the age of twenty Robert Emmet was outlawed, a career in his own land closed to him, his generous and ardent soul turned adrift.

CHAPTER IV

THE rebellion was crushed. In his absence the Union was accomplished and the springs of national patriotism choked up for the next half century. If Robert Emmet had been permitted to remain at home he would have seen the hopelessness of an uprising at that time. But he had been in exile, and there were brave goings on in France. In Paris the struggle in Ireland was looked upon as merely suspended. But what did he find on his return to Dublin? The national spirit seemed to have died. Even Curran, whose elo-

quence had rung in the old Parliament house, and who had defended rebels in the dock, acquiesced in the new order.

They were all kind to him — his old friends. It seemed to be taken for granted that the years had tamed his tongue and taught him discretion. No doubt, at The Priory, he was advised that it should not be difficult for him to make his peace with the government. The family had prestige and fortune, and society would lionize such a returned prodigal. It occurred to no one, apparently, that Robert Emmet could have had any other reason for coming home. To him this talk must all have seemed fantastic mockery of his dreams. Here he was at this harlequin feast of wits at The Priory,

where every one laughed at brilliant nonsense, sentimentalized over poetry, and speculated on philosophy; where there were allusions to the time when Curran should be elevated to the King's Bench, and Moore, with charming audacity, melt king and court to tears with his Irish melodies. Here Moore could play with exquisite pathos the ancient Gaelic air, "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old."

Once, in student rooms at Trinity, when Moore had played those stirring strains, Emmet had sprung to his feet, eyes burning with patriotic fervor, and cried, "Oh that I were marching to that air at the head of twenty thousand men!" and they had all applauded him wildly. Now, if he were to utter such a sentiment in this softly lighted, chintz-

draped drawing-room of The Priory, where Sarah Curran appeared briefly to serve peaches and cream to her father's guests, all his castle of dreams would crash about his devoted head and bury him in the wreckage forever.

Hot heart bursting with grief and bewilderment he seemed, in his difficult self-control, dull and unresponsive to all these successful, officious friends. They no longer spoke the same language. If he told them anything at all it was what indeed was the alternative of failure to win freedom for Ireland, that he had come home to cheer the last forlorn days of his father. A broken household it was, flotsam and jetsam of stormy rebellion, that was living, forgotten by fair-weather friends, in retirement at The Casino. When

his father was gone he meant to join his brother in America. His words and manner were a reproach. No one was quite at ease with him. As he sat there silent and distrait, Curran could rise and say casually, "'Tis a sweet evening, gentlemen, and there's a hermit thrush in the glen. Let us go for a walk in the garden."

Such was the insouciant stage on which was enacted that tragedy of patriotism and love,— Ireland's most dear and poignant memory.

CHAPTER V

THERE is reason to believe that Robert Emmet may have loved Sarah Curran in his boyhood, and had held her image in his heart during his three years' exile. Just before leaving France he wrote to Madame de Fontenay of the possible sacrifice involved in his taking up the cause of Irish freedom: "I must forget everything — that I had friends, hopes, tender ties, perhaps. I am not certain that this can be done." Now he discovered that it could not be done. He was only twenty-four, of ardent tempera-

ment, and natural feeling had been too long pent up.

Did you ever stand in such a garden on a misty Irish night, all moonbeam and dew-fall, waiting for the song of the hermit thrush? One of the few birds that mates for life, its passion outlasts the courtship season, and it sings on October nights, just before taking its southward flight, as it sang in the spring dawns. Curran reveled in the luxury of every such poetic emotion. All voices were hushed in that garden, little groups standing about in the holly and box bordered paths, or in the grotesque shadows of old yews; Curran walking apart noiselessly on the turf, in the avenue of chestnut trees, face upturned to the stars,— "steeping his soul in constellations,"— and then,

quick, indrawn breaths and involuntary hand-clasps, as that wild rapture of love poured out of the mountain glen and flooded the night with liquid melody.

Nothing in the universe then but youth and love's longing, and a natural overflowing of the heart in speech! Was she attached to any one? No? What hope was there then for him? He thought he must always have loved her. His heart was famished for home and affection. "Fancy long denied," Emmet has said, "painted visions of happiness on the air."

This sudden passion, breaking in upon her preoccupation, was somewhat distasteful to Sarah Curran. She had been watching her father in pensive abstraction. He had wandered farther

away from every one, would wander there for hours, lost in that solitude of the soul that often overtook him in the gayest company. Finally, she knew, he would vanish into the midnight gloom of the grove of firs and larches, there to weep himself tearless over the rustic-marked grave of the little singing daughter — the gifted sprite of a child he had loved the best of all. Sarah, with all her love, had never been able to penetrate her father's armor of tears or of laughter. Nevertheless, she turned on this young lover in a passionate vehemence of loyalty.

"Oh, no, no! There is no one for whom I would quit my faher."

CHAPTER VI

EVERY love story involves more than the two central figures. It is complicated and colored in an infinite number and variety of ways, by other ties and duties that assert their own tyranny over the heart. Sarah Curran idolized her father. His fascinating personality eclipsed that of every man she had seen, and across this Arcadian stage of The Priory had passed the wisest, the wittiest, the most uniquely gifted men Europe had to offer. Not one of these guests had ever matched the nameless charm of the convivial deity

who presided as host. Byron said Curran had fifty faces, and every moment in his company some new enchantment. His eye all fire, his tongue all harmony, he had only to speak and every one laughed or wept or wondered at his infinite wizardry, marveled at the wit, the humor, the pathos, the wisdom, the whimsicality, the gay inconsequence, the mimicry, the poetry, that he squandered like a spendthrift but never exhausted.

It is entirely within the probabilities that if Sarah Curran had been fully admitted to her father's kaleidoscopic mental and emotional life, Robert Emmet might have pleaded forever in vain. But the love that she poured out so lavishly on her father watered not the secret desert in his soul, but

returned to her own heart to be poured out again. As the winter went by she must have learned to look for Robert Emmet's coming. For many weeks he visited at The Priory almost daily. From the drawing-room windows or the garden she could watch his eager approach, his reluctant retreat along the grassy bank of the Dodder. By little and little he revealed to her his powers of mind, his moral worth, his personal charm. In excitement his somewhat cold gray eyes burned; his face, ordinary in repose, took on a fine beauty; his boyish figure, a dignity and distinction; his uninspired speech, an eloquence that had won the extravagant predictions of his college mates.

Nowhere had Robert Emmet been

underestimated or ignored. A youth of twenty-four, of no family that was known in France, of no profession or great fortune, he had gained the ear of Napoleon and Talleyrand. And with all his ardor, he had none of the follies and frailties of the youth of the day. Sarah Curran had heard her father pay tribute to his integrity; her brother Richard and Tom Moore, to his extraordinary talents, his intellectual grasp, and to the gentleness and purity of his character. "So young, so intelligent, so ardent, so generous, so brave — so everything the world is apt to admire in a man," as Washington Irving has said of him, he could not have left the heart of this imaginative young girl entirely untouched.

Every hour strengthened his love

for Sarah Curran. Her brother Richard may have known something of his feeling, for to him Emmet wrote on the night of his execution: "I never did tell you how much I idolized your sister. It was not with a wild unfounded passion, but an attachment increasing every hour from an admiration for the purity of her character and respect for her talents." She, too, revealed to him a mind informed and cultivated far beyond what was usual for a girl of that day. To her father's friends she was simply a beautiful maid, shy and sweet and unobtrusive, remarkable only for an exquisite voice that had been trained for her father's delight. To Robert Emmet alone, in all probability, was revealed those graces of the intellect and the affections

that were fitted to crown an exceptional man's life with happiness and honor.

On the rare occasions when he found her alone, sitting with her in the drawing-room of The Priory, in the short winter afternoons, listening to her singing Moore's earliest melodies set to old Irish airs, or taking a cup of tea with her before the flickering glow of a sea-coal fire, everything pleaded with Emmet for complaisance. His future assured, Curran himself would favor his suit. Employment for his talents, fame and fortune, peace and love at a fireside in his own loved country, waited on a word.

But Emmet never spoke that word. Every tiny trefoil of shamrock on the bank of the Dodder pleaded for Ireland and her six-hundred-year-old

dream of liberty. November and December are the saddest months of the year in Erin. Then the veil of fog seems never to lift from the island of saints and sorrows. The very skies weep, the turf and hedges are drenched with rain, the beeches and chestnuts have dropped their tarnished and sodden foliage, and there are splashes of red everywhere — red seed-pods of eglantine trailing from the crags, red berries on the hawthorn and holly, and thick scarlet clusters on the rowan tree — as if the last carnage had spattered blood on a spent and weeping land. If Sarah Curran's heart was preoccupied, Robert Emmet's was torn by contending passions.

CHAPTER VII

IN December, Dr. Robert Emmet, one-time physician to the vice-regal court of Dublin, died. Immediately the household at The Casino was broken up, and Robert Emmet was homeless. There was a notice on the gatepost of The Casino that this attractive country place was for sale. The house was kept in order by a young peasant girl, Anne Devlin, who had long been in the service of the family. At certain hours of the day she sat in the lodge by the gate, in the neat black gown, frilled neckerchief, and mutch cap that are preserved to-

day in her portrait, to answer the bell and to show prospective purchasers through the deserted rooms. Left just as it had been used by a family of means, of cultivation, and of marked personalities, with a forty years' accumulation of treasures, the house was a chrysalis, from which the soul of things had fled.

Robert Emmet seems, for a time, to have slept there. He may always have used it as one of his hiding places, for long afterwards there was discovered an underground passage, leading from a sleeping closet behind wainscoting, in a basement room, beneath the conservatory and on to a summer house under the wall of the garden. But if ever he lay hidden there, or escaped by that way, faithful Anne

Devlin never told. By spring the estate would be settled, and it was understood by Emmet's friends that he meant to take his inheritance of three thousand pounds and join his brother in New York. It was then that he made his second and last appeal for the love of Sarah Curran. Would she go with him into voluntary exile? She had given him no encouragement, nor distinguished him in any way from other acquaintances. Again she refused him, telling him more kindly but none the less firmly, that she had no feeling for him or for any one that could make her wish to leave her father.

What desolation! His father dead, his mother in a hospital and fading from earth, his brother branded as a traitor and seeking asylum in America,

his love rejected, Robert Emmet seems for a time to have drifted, a derelict on the sea of life. It must have appeared to him, heart-sick and lonely, but still unconquered, a sort of happiness to hurl himself against historic wrongs, if only to join the long, silent ranks of patriots under the sod of old Ireland.

It was some time late in the winter or early spring of 1803 that he "found some business ripe for execution and, after mature deliberation, joined it." He began then to lead a furtive life. To The Priory he came at rare intervals. He had, apparently, given up the hope and the purpose of winning Sarah Curran's love, but he returned to see her, again and again, "by some infatuation," as he said in his letter to her father, written in prison, "think-

ing that to myself alone was I giving either pleasure or pain."

In these later visits he was remarked for high spirits and an assured manner. He seemed suddenly to have found some absorbing interest and occupation. Curran noted this shrewdly. With no ostensible employment or place of living, the boy was probably up to some mischief that would presently get him into trouble. Connected with courts, Curran may very early have learned that Emmet had fallen under suspicion.

CHAPTER VIII

A SELF–MADE man, Curran's well-earned honors rested in the good will of the established government. He had not lacked courage in times past. He had defended Irish liberty before the Union. A Protestant, and with little real sympathy for the rebellion, he had yet defended priests and rebels in the dock. High in social favor, he had scorned the society of the Castle set,— dull parasites with brains stewed in wine,— and had hobnobbed with disaffected talent, more to his liking. Because of his very openness, because

of his few political convictions, too, he had come through all these troubled times, debonairly and unscathed. But now that he was older, wiser, richer, and in line for a place on the King's Bench, it behooved him to be more circumspect. Curran liked this reckless young enthusiast well enough, but it was imprudent to have him coming to The Priory.

To tell Emmet to discontinue his visits, however, was an unpleasant thing to do. Richard may have refused to so insult his old friend and college mate. It would seem that Curran was totally ignorant of the reason for Emmet's visits, no doubt ascribed them to the attraction that he himself had for every superior young man in the Irish capital. This igno-

rance, and his constitutional dislike for doing disagreeable things, explain the incredible fact that the duty of delivering the message of dismissal to Emmet was laid upon the young daughter of the house.

It never occurred to Sarah Curran that she could disobey her father, but how that hard sentence of banishment, that affront to two generations of intimacy between the families, pleaded for Robert Emmet. She could not have permitted him to enter her father's house again, only to be told that he was no longer welcome. In April there were charming outdoor occupations at The Priory, so in garden hat, knotted under her chin, and empire morning gown of rosy-flowered cotton print, she must have watched for him

to come along the bank of the Dodder and turn toward the little wicket gate that intimates of the family could come through without ringing. There she met him, dusky eyes soft with sympathy, face flushed with running, to intercept him. It would not be difficult to beguile him to walk with her in that wild mountain glen brimming over with spring. What memories — to carry with him to the New World — this stroll in the green-walled seclusion, under blossoming white thorns, with Sarah Curran!

There, pleading his forgiveness for the hurt, she told him that her father wished him to discontinue his visits to The Priory.

A moment of grave regard, of tenderness for her, of astonished com-

passion that such a task should have been laid upon her, his sore heart comforted, too, that she could so feel for him. He feasted his eyes on her sweet, sweet look, watered the desert of his soul with her tears, and then he begged her not to be troubled about him. He had come, indeed, to see her for the last time, and to say farewell. He was in danger of arrest and might have to leave the country at any hour.

Danger and separation! Surging up from her heart to her eyes — oh, immortal moment — the miracle of love at last!

There they stood — spring running gaily up the rocky slopes, the tinkle and splash of hill fountains in their ears, the hawthorn in wondrous bloom and scent, and the hermit thrush sing-

ing in a delirium of love — these two young lovers, pale and shaken, staring at each other across the void of eternity! From that instant of shocked discovery until the not distant, tragic end, the shadow of death was never once lifted from their hearts. Love came to her when it was least expected, least desired by both, and it wore the guise, not of a blessing, but of a calamity. Exaltation he felt, but none of the rapture of the triumphant lover. He was engaged then in a perilous enterprise, from which he could not, in honor or safety to others, withdraw, and in which he must have stood appalled to find Sarah Curran's happiness embarked.

The plighting of such troth comes to the fortunate but once in a life-

time, a cup of joy to be drained to the last drop. But Robert Emmet dared not linger to make his vows or to hear her confessions. Ever afterwards his chief concern was not how often he might snatch from fate those stolen interviews, but how best he might protect her and the fortunes of her father from any possible connection with his hazardous undertaking. Their love had no rights that were not secondary to other obligations, and if a grave opened at his feet, the secret of that love must be buried with him.

The splendors of success and forebodings of disaster filled all their dreams. Their few brief meetings had all the magic of the incredible that he was still alive, at liberty, and there with his arms around her. Every

good-by kiss held the pain of the last parting. It was in their letters that time and space were granted to pour out their hearts. He seems to have told her everything. Whether he won her entire belief that his venture should succeed will never be known, but it is very certain that she never tried to turn him from his purpose. A girl capable of devotion to two such remarkable men as her father and Robert Emmet could understand that, to this lover, life and love without honor, purchased at the price of abandonment of companions in peril, were worthless. She could tie her maiden token on his arm and send him out to battle for what he felt to be the right. In her letters to him, that were taken from him on his arrest, she called him her

hero as well as her lover, gloried in his past and prayed for his success in this undertaking. Girded so, with love and faith, men have done miracles since the world began. Why not he?

CHAPTER IX

EVEN to-day the event is shrouded in much mystery. One thing that stands out very clearly is that Emmet was sacrificed in a movement that was hopeless from its inception. Whether he was made a pawn in Napoleon's imperial game, heartlessly encouraged to distract the attention and energies of England; whether he was trapped in a government net set for malcontents; whether the uprising was spontaneous, but weak and faint-hearted, may never be known. It may have been a mixture of all three, inextricably entangled in evidence sup-

pressed at the trial. Emmet himself said that he was not the life and heart of that insurrection, but his superiors he refused to betray and they were never discovered. He "found some business ripe for execution and joined it." He repudiated the charge that he was an emissary of France, but he had been given to understand in Paris that Napoleon meant to strike some blow at England in August, 1803, and England's extremity was Ireland's opportunity to win her own freedom. The task allotted to Emmet was the taking of Dublin Castle and Pigeon House Fort.

The firing of rockets was to bring armed recruits from Wicklow and Kildare. Emmet's part of the uprising was the only one that materialized.

He came out into the open, protecting every one but himself. On the pleasant summer evening when, surrounded and betrayed, he made his desperate sally out of Marshalsea Lane, he said, "If I fail, there will be only one man to crush."

Either the danger that threatened Emmet in the spring lessened, or he escaped arrest by taking greater precautions. In April he disappeared. It was thought by his friends that he had left the country. But under an assumed name he had taken a farmhouse, hidden away in Butterfield Lane, behind the village of Rathfarnham, and looking along the slope of the mountain to The Priory. From this retreat, known only to two men, he directed the manufacture and collection of arms

and ammunition in two depots in The Liberties, sinking all his patrimony in the venture. Day and night Sarah Curran's window in the gable of The Priory was in plain view. From her casement came many a signal — the flutter of a kerchief, the light of a candle; and some similar signal, displayed at the farmhouse, reassured her of his safety. "I did hold the removal of her anxiety above every other consideration — not to leave her uncertain of my situation," Emmet wrote to her father.

CHAPTER X

THE summer crept on — May, June, and up to mid-July. In August, Napoleon in the Channel and the green flag on Dublin Castle! For three months this story of patriotism and sacrificial love was sustained on a heroic level. From danger the weak soul shrinks, dissolves in tremors and tears. Many who can face sudden peril with sufficient courage break under long strain. Only souls draped in purple can sit, lips red and smiling, under a sword of Damocles. Every hour of that long summer Emmet was in danger of dis-

covery; every hour of it dragged its slow length through trivial household and social duties for Sarah Curran. He had his work to occupy and sustain him, but she dared not even weep. Through all those weeks of suspense, no restlessness, anxiety, or change in her little round of habits betrayed her.

Anne Devlin, who slipped over from The Casino to attend to Emmet's few wants at the farmhouse, could have gone to The Priory freely, to visit acquaintances in the servants' hall, and she was, in all probability, the bearer of the letters between the lovers. If she did this for them she never told, as she told nothing else. Her loyalty added to Emmet's difficulties in the end. Such faith may be repaid only in kind.

One hopes that Sarah Curran saw her lover at least once in the green and white and gold uniform, gold epaulets, plumed hat, and sword, in which he dashed out of Marshalsea Lane to lead a cause foredoomed to failure. It is thus all Ireland remembers him to-day; the way in which he is pictured in crude lithographs that hang in countless Irish cabins. In that garb of the patriot, worn at a time when they were hanging men for the wearing of the green; in his stainless young manhood, his beneficent plans for republican government, his enthusiasm and high hope, he must have appeared to her a veritable Sir Galahad. And where is the girl who can love like the maid of Erin,—tender, trusting, ardent, material; all blushes and fond kisses and brooding

tears, to set the brain and the heart of him on fire. And his eloquence — fuel to those flames in her breast! We have but one example of Emmet's oratory, but that is the noblest speech ever delivered from the dock by a man condemned to the gallows, a deathless oration that eclipses Curran's forty years at the Irish bar. To such as these two, life and love have a poignant sweetness that the less endowed may never know. It was thus they parted for the last time, life and love and high endeavor, such warm and pulsing things that failure and death must stand disarmed before them.

There was a month or more to wait, much preparation still to be made, when the event was precipitated by an explosion in Emmet's Patrick Street

depot. The detonations could have been heard, the glare of the flames have been seen from The Priory. With all the city and country side in wild alarm, the signal light in the farmhouse was blown out. Sarah Curran's lover was gone into The Liberties of Dublin, that labyrinth of wretched streets, blind alleys, and crooked lanes, crowded with decayed mansions fallen into tenements and shops, haunt of the criminal and the outcast as well as of the poor. A treacherous region at all times, it now swarmed with policemen, spies, and soldiers. There he worked and ate and slept, amid explosives, his life also at the mercy of forty workmen, some of whom were spies, some purchasable informers.

A week of deathlike silence, her

heart on the rack, and then — rockets, piercing the peaceful sky of that soft summer evening of July 23. Confusion and shots, and again alarm spreading across the country — cottage doors flaring open, startled notes of interrogation of the dusk, and dim figures of men running down all the roads!

CHAPTER XI

SARAH CURRAN at her casement window, counting the seconds in heart throbs, could not know that everything had gone wrong all day, that there had been misunderstanding, betrayal, and a falling away of the faint-hearted; that discovery was imminent, and the blow forced prematurely. In fancy she followed her lover at the head of an armed host, storming the Castle. She could not know that all the furies had been let loose, that this was not revolution — disciplined men fighting armed foes for a principle — but the sudden gathering

of a lawless mob bent on pillage and murder. While assassination and loot held horrid carnival in The Liberties, while torches searched foul hallways and noisome closes, cavalry charged the rioters and cannon shots ringed the Castle and barracks, Emmet and a dozen companions had thrown down their unstained arms and fled in horror, slipping through obscure back lanes in their conspicuous uniforms. At eleven o'clock Emmet gained the Rathfarnham farmhouse and flashed a signal to Sarah Curran.

Victory! But the light was so swiftly extinguished that it might have been a firefly. The confusion in the city continued until midnight. Still fighting, and he not there! Oh, what did it mean? Mounted troops, British

cavalry, came out to patrol the roads and to pursue flying men. And now, across the fields and along hedges, there slipped a figure that crouched and ran and vanished in the shadow of The Priory wall. For an instant he stood out in the moonlight in all his bravery of green and white and gold, lifted his hat to her dim silhouette at the window, bent his head in deepest dejection, and was gone into the mountain glen.

Failure! A fugitive! Oh, no matter; nothing mattered, since he was alive and safe in the mountains! True pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft as she was, better than revolutions, Sarah Curran knew and trusted the ways of these dear home mountains. She could follow every footstep of her lover

now, up the narrow glen, knee-deep in bracken; up the ferny rock-slope canopied with foliage against betraying moonlight. There he could drink from some holy well, ringed round with charmed life; seek sanctuary in some fairy-protected cave. In the morning he could follow the watercourse up to the fall, slipping through hazel thickets along the ledges; climb through dark groves of conifers and plantations of birch and rowan trees; mount broad slopes of heather and gorse and crimson foxgloves, strewn with great boulders, and scale some granite cliff by deep-rooted pines and cable-like trailers. By noon of the next day he could stand on that bald, cairn-crowned, melancholy dome, himself unseen, and see a redcoat five miles away on every side.

It was a retreat that Anne Devlin knew, and the rough way had no difficulties that her strong young peasant body could not overcome. Some heartening message could be got to him there, some — oh, she knew that this was exile or death, and here was the man for whom she must quit her father. The wilder blue mountains of Wicklow lay to the south, to be gained through high passes and narrow valleys, and a boat, sails set, waited in the harbor of Wexford to bear him away to France.

Her mountains would guard her lover. He was safer now than in any moment since the plighting of their troth in April. The dark head slipped to the pillow to dream of happier days. Some day, in some way, a green little home in the back settlements of

America was to be the blessed end of all their tortuous journeyings.

CHAPTER XII

SARAH CURRAN could face her little world with a blither heart, in the morning hear Emmet's name spoken in every tone of astonishment, execration, and compassion, too, that one so young and gifted should have been so ill-advised. She could watch scarlet-coated cavalry scour the country, with never a glance from them at Curran's unimpeachable little demésne. Anne Devlin went up to Emmet's hiding place once to take letters and plain clothing, but did not venture again. "Only one man to crush," and all the machinery of a

powerful government set in motion to do it,— marching regiments, patrolling coasts, honeycombing the region with secret police, and torturing a simple serving-maid.

A clue, got from some unfortunate fellow conspirator who had been captured, and there was a descent upon the Rathfarnham farmhouse, the car of Juggernaut rolling over Anne Devlin. She was offered a thousand pounds to betray Emmet's retreat. She was hanged from the shafts of a tipped-up cart, left for dead, hanged again, threatened with nameless maltreatment, and finally thrown into Kilmainham jail. But gold could not bribe, torture wring from her, nor solitary confinement break down her spirit. All the powers of a great government

were baffled by the loyalty of this unlettered peasant girl.

Such horrors! Sarah Curran knew that poor Anne Devlin was innocent of any knowledge of Emmet's plans, but she could not speak a word for her and jeopardize her own father's name and liberty. In some way Emmet learned of the desperate plight of Anne Devlin and of his associates. Many surmises, some of them foolish, have been made as to why he ventured back into Dublin, but none of them seems so in character as that he could not abandon these unfortunates. Waiting until pursuit slackened, he slipped down to the house of a widow who let lodgings near the bridge at Harold's Cross, intending to leave papers where they would certainly fall into the hands of the gov-

ernment, and that should stay some threatened executions. There he was captured, so immediately as to leave little room for doubt that he was betrayed by an informer.

The news was not many hours old before Curran brought it home. At five o'clock it was still broad sunlight in the garden of The Priory, where Sarah Curran was accustomed to sit at a rustic tea table, some bit of embroidery at hand. If the world spun around her a moment, at least she did not faint or show undue agitation; and then a ray of light and hope pierced the black chaos that enveloped her.

CHAPTER XIII

HER father was to defend him! Little wizard, Curran had got off many a "traitor" who deserved hanging! "Brave?" she asked. Oh, yes, foolhardy! To his incredible folly Emmet now added stubborn silence, took all the blame on himself, and was trying to bargain for the release of some of the accused. It seemed, too, that this serious youth was romantic. He had fought his captors like a demon, but two love letters, unsigned, had been taken from him. Very remarkable letters, from the reports. He, Emmet's

counsel, was not permitted to see them. *Mademoiselle Inconnue* was fully in Emmet's confidence, and had brains that she would better have put to better use than meddling with sedition. No stone would be left unturned to discover the writer. They had been passed around, and were now the subject of ribald jests of soldiers and jailers.

She still sat there in the garden when her father and his guests went in to dinner. It would not be entirely dark before nine o'clock. In those long days of northern summer there were so many hours of dawn and twilight, so few of kind darkness in which her fainting spirit might have respite of wearing this mask of polite concern or indifference. Perhaps, now, Sarah Curran did not want night to come.

As long as the light lay on the plain below, she could make out the fortress-like mass of Kilmainham jail, then on the southern outskirts of the city. While the light still lingered on the mountain top in pink and amethyst and gold, the shadow lengthened across the flats until the grim pile was swallowed up.

On the arched pediment over the main doorway of Ireland's bastile is carved, in low relief, seven struggling devils, symbolic of the fate of those who enter. There he lay, her hero and lover, so hidden, so friendless, so reviled, extremity of peril darkening around his head, beset with what traps and pitfalls for his swift betrayal. Her letters! A gasping sigh there, on the odorous dusk of Curran's "little

tiring room of paradise." Their love, how profaned! Of herself she could not have thought overmuch. But those letters were a new danger to him, for Emmet would barter his soul to protect her and her father. Now that night was come, she might dare seek sanctuary to pray for her lover in mortal peril; to pray for strength, not to go to him, but to keep the vow they both had taken to guard the honor of her father.

She made no change that was remarked in her habits, but went through her little round of duties and pleasures; clipped roses for the drawing-room, arranged the dessert, sang to her father's guests, dressed as he liked to see her, wrote the interminable number of polite notes that were then ex-

changed between the ladies of country houses, served tea to callers, drove out, perhaps in gay attire, to attend garden parties, where all the talk was of her lover, his mysterious sweetheart and his probable fate. She could scarcely have slept through nights that were one long dread as to what new disaster the morrow might hold for them. Often she must have longed to throw herself on her father's breast, and find relief of confession and tears. If he knew, then indeed he must become superhuman in his efforts to save her lover.

But if her father knew he might betray undue anxiety for his client, and that would subject him to suspicion. It was a nightmare of a time — the government in a panic of fright at the possibility of an Irish insurrection

and a Napoleonic invasion. No one was safe. Every avenue of escape for her lover closing, the coils tightened around her heart. In some incredible way this young girl bore that mounting anguish alone, might have borne it to the end, without self-betrayal, and buried the secret of their love in the grave that opened at Robert Emmet's feet.

In a fortnight the sensation of the letters was almost forgotten in new developments. Then Emmet was betrayed again by some supposed friend to whom he entrusted a letter to Sarah Curran. Every page of Irish history is stained with the slimy trail of the informer.

CHAPTER XIV

AS Curran drove through the gate of The Priory one morning troops galloped out from the city and intercepted him on the bridge at Harold's Cross. A brief exchange of excited speech, and the carriage was turned and driven rapidly back. The house was suddenly filled with tramping feet and loud voices — official accusations and indignant denial. There were warrants to search Curran and his house, and for the arrest of his daughter.

If Sarah Curran had one last letter, lying on her heart, be sure she burned

it there in the fireplace of her chamber before she went down. Her heart was suddenly lightened that she had no choice but to share her lover's fate. But her father they must not molest! That angry tumult of voices and hurried search in her ears, she groped her way down the stairs, half blind and tottering to a fall, the long strain telling on her, in this supreme effort to save her father.

Then she saw him. He had carried himself jauntily for fifty-three years, in conscious superiority and pride. Was this her father who stood there, bleached with fright, shriveled with humiliation, frantic to exonerate himself? He would submit himself and his papers to the government, throw up his brief for that vile mis-

creant and abandon him to his fate. He repudiated his daughter, but he begged to be spared the degradation of seeing his name in the dock. If she had fallen so low as to hide evidence in his house —

"My father — there has been nothing — hidden here — but my broken heart."

Even then she would have thrown herself on his breast, but he warded her away with flashing eyes and spurning hands, and heaped upon her bitter invective and cold contempt. And when she had fallen unconscious at his feet, he directed servants to take her away, out of his sight. He never wished to see her face again.

He never did see her face again. She lay there in an upper chamber of

The Priory, out of her father's sight and hearing, for many weeks. She could not have been removed from the bed in which she alternated between delirium and stupor, but she was never again in any way molested. The authorities were satisfied that this love episode had no real relation to Emmet's conspiracy, and there is little likelihood that the government would, in any case, have risked popular anger by putting one so young, so lovely, so crushed by misfortune, in the dock. But the threat was undoubtedly used to make Emmet's conviction sure. If he had any chance of acquittal he relinquished it. He offered to plead guilty to the charge of treason, to submit no evidence in his own defense, and to forego his right to address

the people from the scaffold, if Curran was relieved of suspicion, and Sarah Curran's name and letters kept out of court. So eagerly were these terms accepted, so carefully was the story suppressed, that Emmet was able to write his brother that his engagement to her was little known. It became a matter of public knowledge only when Sarah Curran was driven from her father's house.

She knew nothing of that sad bargaining, nothing of that hurried trial, nothing of that noble speech which moved even the "hanging" judge to tears, nothing of the letters Emmet wrote to her father, her brother, and to his brother and sister-in-law in America. Those letters were all about her, detailing the story of that blameless,

tragic love, begging a little kindness for her, asking his brother to "receive her as my wife, love her as a sister, in case her natural protectors fall away." That letter was not delivered; and none of those letters was to her. Emmet may have understood that she might never recover her reason, for in his letter to Richard he said: "I have had public duties to sustain me, and have not permitted my spirit to sink, but when I think of her situation, death would be a relief."

She knew nothing of that last scene of all!

CHAPTER XV

SARAH CURRAN came back slowly to a world where he was not — a gray world of shadows. Her little universe had held two figures. Now it was empty. Her image of her father had been shattered at her feet, and she could not reconstruct her idol from the fragments. Emmet's race was run, his lamp of life extinguished, his epitaph unwritten, his grave unknown. As far as might be his very memory was obliterated. That death, how frightful; that beloved head, how dishonored; that name, how execrated! She had no

letter, no token. Of neither her father nor her lover had she any tender memories of last partings, over which to weep her way back to sanity and love of life. There were no graves — only red shock and black ruin — her soul driven back on its own desolation.

One short year had rolled around since her father had written Richard from Paris to tell Sarah he had not forgotten her. The gold was on the beeches and chestnuts, St. Martin's violet haze on that wide and charming prospect of land and sea, when Sarah Curran was banished from the garden of The Priory. She went away submissively to the village of Newmarket, County Cork, where her father was born.- There she was left alone with a gentle-mannered Quaker family named

Penrose. A picturesque hamlet, it lay on the border of Kerry, twenty Irish miles from the lakes of Killarney.

In that region there are many estates of the nobility, and even in that day of difficult travel, numbers journeyed far to see Killarney's fabled loveliness. Nothing had been published, but filtering through private sources her story became widely known, and the most sympathetic attentions were showered upon her by people of distinction. She never refused these kindnesses, but received them all with a gentle abstraction that was more pathetic than tears. If left alone for very long she fell into a state of melancholy. She never recovered more than the frailest physical hold on life.

She did not even refuse marriage. She tried to fulfill Emmet's wish that she should marry and be happy, but she was not able even to live. Captain Sturgeon of the British Army, a nephew of the Marquis of Rockingham, married her, knowing her heart was buried with Emmet, but hoping, by his devotion, to rescue her forlorn and fading life. He took her away to Sicily and to his home in England. Docile as a child, she went about with him in society. She is described, at this time, as having a face spirituelle and colorless, in which her dark eyes appeared somewhat too large and brilliant, as with unshed tears. Her soul an arid waste, she was never seen to weep, but was lost, for the most part, in sad revery.

CHAPTER XVI

IN the spring of 1808 Sarah Curran died in Kent, of no specific disease, but in a gradual decline. She lies to-day in the churchyard in Newmarket, on the bank of the Avendala, a dancing sprite of a river that foams down from the wild crags of Kerry. Why she should have been buried there, among the people of the father who had forsaken her, rather than in Kent, where she was tenderly cherished, is accounted for perhaps by her wish to lie in "the land where her hero was sleeping."

Even then all Ireland was Emmet's

tomb, his memory kept green in the heart of a nation. When Moore wrote that tribute to her, and "Oh breathe not his name" to her lover, Emmet's grave was sequestered. But now there is a spot that is pointed out as, in all probability, his final resting place. It is in Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin, Ireland's Westminster.

Opposite the stone and iron gate the lofty shaft of O'Connell's monument rises from a thicket of old slabs and Celtic crosses. Turning down the path to the right, Mangan lies here, Griffin there. Anne Devlin has a handsome stone setting forth her story. The path to it is worn smooth by pilgrims, and the mound often bears its tribute of flowers. You turn to the left between borders of unfading laurel,

holly and box, around the rear of the chapel, past Druid yews that guard the approach with a thousand violet eyes set like sentinels on the outposts.

This is the Protestant part of the cemetery and is less crowded. Between the ivy-draped stone wall and the graveled path there is room for a giant birch tree, and for a rough slab of stone that bears no inscription and marks no mound. There, it is believed, lies Robert Emmet, under a bend in the walk itself, his grave denied the right to wear nature's own green robe, the spot trodden underfoot unknowingly by thousands who reverence his memory.

So many things left unexplained, obscure, in this story! In that last scene of all, on the rude scaffold

raised in The Liberties, there was a singular incident that has been the subject of many surmises. Another is surely admissible. He faced death with fortitude and serenity; but as he stood there, blindfolded, a handkerchief in hand to be dropped, he twice delayed giving the signal. Erect and motionless, his head was thrown back as if he were lost in some uplifting thought. A peasant woman in the crowd drew her Connemarra cloak over her head and raised the *keen* — that prehistoric, Gaelic wail for the dead. Ireland had begun her long mourning, but he was unmoved.

What image was it upon which he fixed his mind, if not the most precious experience that life had held for him,— *that walk with Sarah Curran in the*

wild mountain glen, brimming over with spring?

"Are you ready, Mr. Emmet?"

"Not yet." *Spring running up the rocky slopes, the tinkle and splash of hill fountains in their ears, the white thorns in wondrous bloom and scent, and the hermit thrush singing in a delirium of rapture.*

"Are you ready, Mr. Emmet?"

"Not yet." *And surging up from her heart to her eyes, oh, immortal moment — the miracle of love, at last!*

Memory of memories, to take with him, beyond any grave, into eternity.